



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
**ENERGY**

**TITLE IX COMPLIANCE REVIEW**

**UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA**

**School of Electrical Engineering and  
Computer Science**

*Fiscal Year 2010*

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## **I. Introduction**

The Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCRD), United States Department of Energy (DOE or the Department), conducted a Title IX compliance review of the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (School or EECS) at the University of Central Florida (University or UCF) pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), as amended, 20 U.S.C. section 1681, *et seq.*, and the Department's implementing regulations, 10 C.F.R. Part 1042. This report is based on a review of records and other data provided by the University, information obtained from the University's website, and information obtained by an OCRD review team during an on-campus site visit in March 2009. During the onsite visit, the review team held interviews with graduate students and faculty of the School, the Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Programs, and other University administrative officials.

### **A. Objective**

The objective of the review was two-fold: (1) to determine whether students in EECS, regardless of their sex, had equal access to opportunities and benefits offered by the School; and (2) to identify and report on promising practices for promoting gender equity.

### **B. Scope**

The review involved an evaluation of the University's Title IX policies, procedures, and practices, including the University's grievance process, as well as the role of the Title IX Coordinator in implementing and enforcing Title IX requirements. The Department also evaluated and analyzed the following programs and practices of the University, as they relate to the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science: (a) recruitment and outreach; (b) admission and retention; (c) teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and fellowships; and (d) campus safety. In addition, the Department evaluated the academic environment, and inquired into whether there were any pending sexual harassment complaints and whether sexual harassment training had been offered to students, faculty, and staff.

### **C. Background**

DOE oversees the Nation's research programs in high-energy physics, nuclear physics, and fusion energy sciences, and is one of the primary Federal funding agencies for basic research and development programs in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) disciplines at educational institutions throughout the country. This research supports thousands of principal investigators, and graduate and post-doctoral students.

Title IX and DOE implementing regulations (10 C.F.R. Part 1042) prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity that receives Federal financial

assistance. These laws require that the Department conduct reviews of grantee institutions to ensure that they are in compliance with the prohibition against sex discrimination.

In July 2004, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report (GAO Report Number 04-639) in which it reviewed compliance activities of the four Federal science agencies (the Department of Energy, the Department of Education, the National Science Foundation, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration). The GAO found that the science agencies had taken significant steps to ensure that the institutions to which they provide financial assistance are in compliance with Title IX. However, the GAO also found that women, especially in engineering programs, were not fully represented in those institutions.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the GAO recommended that science agencies conduct post-award monitoring to ensure that women are allowed full opportunity to participate in the sciences and that sex discrimination is not preventing women from pursuing degrees in science.

The passage of the America COMPETES Act, Pub. L. No. 110-69, 121 Stat. 573 (2007), in August 2007, provided additional impetus for conducting compliance reviews. This Act directs the Secretary of Energy to report to the congressional energy committees on the actions taken by the Department to implement the recommendations in the GAO report. The Act also requires DOE to conduct annually at least two compliance reviews of institutions to which it provides funding.

#### **D. Methodology**

In November 2008, we sent a notice to the President of UCF, Dr. John C. Hitt, to inform the University about our upcoming visit. One month after sending the letter to Dr. Hitt, we followed up with a letter and data request to the Provost and Executive Vice President, Dr. Terry L. Hickey. The data request contained 59 questions related to three main areas: (1) Title IX policies and procedures, (2) outreach and recruitment efforts, and (3) admissions, demographics and retention. UCF was given 60 days to send their response to the data request. Janet Balanoff, Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Programs, is our point of contact at the University.

A team of 11 members was on site for two days, March 30-31, 2009. They interviewed 59 students, 11 administrators and 13 faculty members.

In writing this report, we reviewed the laws and regulations related to Title IX. We also reviewed and analyzed interview notes taken by team members and the University's response to our data request.

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<sup>1</sup> "In 1999-2000, women were a majority of both undergraduate and graduate students in life sciences, while only one-fifth of engineering students were women, at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels." GAO Report Number 04-639 at 16. In a 2000 study, it was reported that only 20% of enrolled students in graduate engineering programs are women. *Id.* at 39. The same is true for female faculty in engineering; the lowest percentage of female faculty is in engineering programs. *Id.* at 22.

## II. The School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science

The School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science is part of the College of Engineering and Computer Science. The School offers the following eight graduate degrees: MS and PhD in Computer Science, MS and PhD in Electrical Engineering, MS, and PhD in Computer Engineering, MS in Computer Science with Bioinformatics Specialization and MS in Digital Forensics.

### A. Student Population

Four hundred and ninety four students (290 full-time and 204 part-time) were enrolled in graduate programs at EECS at the beginning of the 2008-2009 academic year.<sup>2</sup> Of those, 411 were males (238 full-time and 173 part-time) and 83 were females (52 full-time and 31 part-time). Fifty-nine students (28 females and 31 males) were interviewed during the March 2009 onsite visit, representing 12% of the student population.

Table 1A, below, shows the number and percentage of full-time male and female graduate students enrolled in EECS from academic year 2004-2005 through the 2008-2009 academic year. Table 1B shows the number and percentage of part-time male and female graduate students enrolled in the School during the same period.

Table 1A: Full-time Graduate Student Enrollment<sup>3</sup>

Full-time Students	Total	Male		Female	
2004-2005	352	283	80%	69	20%
2005-2006	339	277	82%	62	18%
2006-2007	328	271	83%	57	17%
2007-2008	326	271	83%	55	17%
2008-2009	290	238	82%	52	18%

Table 1B: Part-time Graduate Student Enrollment<sup>4</sup>

Part-time Students	Total	Male		Female	
2004-2005	205	167	81%	38	19%
2005-2006	167	137	82%	30	18%
2006-2007	149	134	90%	15	10%
2007-2008	153	131	86%	22	14%
2008-2009	204	173	85%	31	15%

<sup>2</sup> The number of students listed is current as of the spring semester 2009.

<sup>3</sup> The enrollment numbers are based on student enrollment for the fall semester of each academic year, except for academic year 2008-2009. The figures for academic year 2008 – 2009 represent student enrollment for the spring semester. Full-time students are those students who take nine or more credit hours.

<sup>4</sup> The enrollment numbers are based on student enrollment for the fall semester of each academic year, except for academic year 2008-2009. The figures for academic year 2008 – 2009 represent student enrollment for the spring semester. Part-time students are those students taking fewer than nine credit hours.

## **B. Faculty**

In academic year 2008-2009, there were 46 faculty members in EECS, of whom four were females and 42 were males. Thirteen faculty members (4 females and 9 males) and the Director of the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science were interviewed during the onsite visit.

## **C. Recruitment and Outreach**

Recruitment and outreach efforts conducted by EECS are extensive. Graduate students that attended UCF for their undergraduate degrees indicated that they received emails, prior to their undergraduate graduation, about many of the graduate opportunities available. However, most of the students said they were not recruited by the School. In addition, most of the students cannot identify a single outreach or recruitment event. Only one student stated that he attended an outreach event and that he was invited to participate in a campus tour while he was in high school.

Graduate coordinators conduct most of the outreach events. The graduate coordinators pointed out that they conduct outreach activities at least twice a year. One student said that he regularly participates in graduate fairs where he provides information to prospective students. Some of the outreach events are discussed below.

### **1. Recruiting Gathering**

EECS hosts eight *Recruiting Gatherings* each for juniors and seniors. These open houses highlight the advantages of graduate education to prospective applicants. They are attended by students interested in getting involved in undergraduate research experiences and in pursuing graduate studies at the University of Central Florida or elsewhere.

*Recruiting Gatherings* are also attended by faculty members interested in attracting undergraduate and graduate students. At these *Gatherings*, graduate coordinators describe to students the admissions process and degrees requirements. The graduate coordinators also outline the benefits of getting involved in research. They identify and encourage students to apply for national fellowship awards.

Each student who attends a *Gathering* is asked to fill out a questionnaire. The completed questionnaires are then distributed to faculty members after the *Gathering* for follow up with those students who expressed an interest in the graduate program.

### **2. Personal Contact with Prospective Students**

Faculty members take the initiative to talk to undergraduate students in their classrooms about research and related topics. They end up recruiting some of these students into their particular research programs. Faculty members also correspond more informally with other prospective students throughout the school year.

Faculty members come from a variety of countries. They make connections with many colleagues and universities as they travel to attend international professional conferences. During their travels, they take it upon themselves to advertise their research programs and the opportunities that are available at the school to engage in study and participate in research. These interactions with faculty and students at overseas universities serve as a useful recruitment tool.

### **3. Research Experience for Undergraduates**

*Research Experience for Undergraduates* (REU) provides opportunities for talented undergraduate students to participate in research projects during a 10-week period each summer. The program is sponsored by the National Science Foundation. There are REU sites in the science, mathematics, and engineering departments of participating host institutions throughout the country. UCF has two active REU programs. One is in the Computer Vision Laboratory and the other is in the Machine Learning Laboratory.

### **4. EXCEL Program**

The College of Engineering and Computer Science sponsors an EXCEL program. The mission of the EXCEL program is to increase student success in the first two years of their college career in a STEM discipline. The EXCEL program offers a variety of benefits to participants, such as on-campus housing, availability of academic advisors and paid research experience. The program is available only to undergraduate students, and serves as an opportunity to encourage students to consider graduate programs after completing their undergraduate study.

### **5. Incoming Students' Database**

To facilitate the process of communication between EECS faculty and incoming students, the School has created an Incoming Students' Database. EECS faculty members have the opportunity to electronically review the credentials of approximately 200 applicants every year. They use this information to promote their research and to encourage those students who they deem qualified to accept offers of admission.

## **Finding**

From our review, we find no evidence of sex discrimination. Accordingly, we also find that the outreach and recruitment policies and practices of EECS comport with Title IX requirements.



## **D. Admissions**

### **1. Pre-application Process**

The College of Engineering and Computer Science requires pre-application to all its disciplines. The pre-application process was created to allow applicants to have their basic academic credentials reviewed and to receive feedback prior to completing the University's online application. The College wants to make sure that students are given guidance prior to submitting the longer application. The University's online application procedures require applicants to provide extensive information.

There is generally a pre-application fee. However, graduate coordinators are allowed to dispense a number of application fee waivers. The number varies annually. A student who shows exceptional promise at the pre-application stage maybe granted a waiver as an incentive to apply to the University. A decision is generally made in approximately 14 business days after the submission of the pre-application.

### **2. Application Process**

The College of Graduate Studies coordinates the admission process with each of the graduate program directors. Non-degree seeking students are also admitted.

In order to enroll in graduate classes, students must have obtained a baccalaureate or higher degree from a regionally accredited U.S. institution or from a recognized foreign institution prior to the start of the term for which the student seeks admission.

The admissions process begins with the receipt of the Graduate Online Application for Admission and the completion of all other application requirements. In addition to the completed application form, applicants must also submit transcripts, test scores, and evidence of residency status. Students applying to doctoral programs must submit a resume or curriculum vitae, three letters of recommendation, and a written essay.

The College of Graduate Studies allows each program to choose whether to require the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). For example, for doctoral programs, students who already have a graduate degree in the same or related area are not required to take the GRE unless it is required by the program. For the Master's degree, a program can also choose to require the GRE.

For the summer and fall of 2008, the GRE was required for all MS and PhD programs at EECS. At that time, the minimum admission requirement for regular admission was a 3.0 GPA or a 1000 on the GRE. All students had to take the GRE, regardless of their undergraduate GPA.

For 2009 (spring, summer, and fall semesters), the GRE was not required for MS programs. However, it was required for doctoral programs. Regular admission was granted for applicants who had a 3.0 GPA.

Beginning in the spring of 2010, a GRE score of 1000 or a GPA of 3.0 will again be required for the Computer Science MS, the Computer Engineering MS, and the Electrical Engineering MS programs. The Digital Forensics program does not require GRE scores.

International students must demonstrate proficiency in the English language. They are required to submit an acceptable score on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) before they can be admitted to the University. However, international students who meet any of the following criteria are excepted from this obligation: they are from a country where English is the only official language; they have earned a degree from a regionally accredited U.S. college or University; they have earned a degree from a country where English is the only official language or from a University at which English is the only official language of instruction.

Once the online application and all application requirements are received, the College of Graduate Studies informs the applicant by e-mail of its receipt of the application. Completed applications are processed by the College of Graduate Studies. Although applications to EECS are reviewed by that School, acceptance into the electrical engineering and computer science graduate program is granted by the College of Graduate Studies.

### **3. Graduate Committee**

The Graduate Committee consists of one member from each of the technical areas of EECS. The Committee meets during the fall semester to decide academic requirements that will be in place for the next academic year. The Committee is responsible for reviewing applications for fellowships, sending out letters of acceptance, and for making decisions on the qualifying review. The Committee is also responsible for reviewing graduate catalogs and for exploring new programs. There was no female on the Committee during the 2008-2009 academic year. However, female professors previously served on the Committee.

Sixty faculty members from undergraduate and graduate programs participate in the admissions process. They select students from the Incoming Students' Database who they then recommend to the Committee for admission.

All applicants to the master's program who have the minimum requirement of a 3.0 GPA in the last 60 hours of study are admitted. One professor described the process as a rubber stamp acceptance.

The admissions process for PhD programs is decentralized. The Committee makes its recommendation based on academics. However, international students must provide proof of sufficient funds to meet their expenses before they are offered admission.

Graduate coordinators who were interviewed stated that since October 2008, the Office of Graduate Studies must give final approval of all potentially admitted students before

admission letters are sent out. They also said that if an application is complete, the applicant is generally notified of the decision on his/her application in two to three weeks. On being asked, the graduate coordinators said that an applicant's sex is not considered in the admissions process.

The University does not guarantee funding for the duration of a graduate student's studies. However, the University endeavors to provide funding for one year. After that, students may seek financial assistance through fellowships, teaching assistantships, and research assistantships.

#### 4. Admissions Statistics

Table 2A and 2B, below, show the number and percentage of applicants, admitted students and students who eventually enrolled in the master's and PhD programs from academic year 2004-2005 through the 2008-2009 academic year.

**Table 2A: Master's Program: Applicants, Admissions, and New Enrollees  
By Gender Per Academic Year<sup>5</sup>**

	Applicants				
	Total	Male		Female	
2004-2005	548	443	81%	105	19%
2005-2006	577	470	81%	107	19%
2006-2007	691	564	82%	127	18%
2007-2008	663	526	79%	137	21%
2008-2009	637	522	82%	115	18%

	Admissions				Enrollees			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
2004-2005	142	81%	34	19%	79	78%	22	22%
2005-2006	167	84%	32	16%	98	87%	14	13%
2006-2007	156	83%	32	17%	84	87%	13	13%
2007-2008	181	78%	50	22%	87	78%	25	22%
2008-2009	149	82%	32	18%	66	85%	12	15%

<sup>5</sup> This table does not include students who were admitted to certificate programs. However, it includes pre-applications of those students who did not ultimately apply to EECS.

**Table 2B: PhD Program: Admissions, and New Enrollees  
By Gender Per Academic Year<sup>6</sup>**

	Applicants					Admitted			
	Total	Male		Female		Male		Female	
2004-2005	445	338	76%	107	24%	131	78%	38	22%
2005-2006	412	317	77%	95	23%	117	81%	28	19%
2006-2007	507	398	79%	109	21%	114	78%	33	22%
2007-2008	555	426	77%	129	23%	120	77%	35	23%
2008-2009	605	468	77%	137	23%	144	75%	49	25%

	New Enrollment			
	Male		Female	
2004-2005	72	77%	22	23%
2005-2006	58	83%	12	17%
2006-2007	52	84%	10	16%
2007-2008	43	78%	10	22%
2008-2009	49	80%	12	20%

## 5. Student Evaluation of the Admissions Process

A majority of the students who were interviewed said that the admissions process is standardized. They explained that it involves completing an application form, and submitting test scores, a letter of interest, and letters of recommendation. Most of the students who were interviewed said they did not believe anything in their admission experience was unfair. Although they recognized that there was a significantly larger number of male students than female students, they said they did not believe the admissions process and procedures were biased in favor of male applicants.

### Finding

The Department finds no evidence of gender disparity in the admissions process. Accordingly, EECS is in compliance with Title IX and DOE's implementing regulations with respect to its admissions policies and practices.

## E. Retention, On-Leave Status, and Re-Entry

### 1. Retention

Female students take an average of two years to complete a master's degree in electrical engineering and computer engineering, and an average of two and a half years to complete a master's degree in computer science. Male students take an average of two and a half years to complete all master's programs. With respect to

<sup>6</sup> This table includes pre-applications of those students who did not ultimately apply to EECS.

doctoral programs, female students take four years to complete electrical engineering and computer science degrees. No female student has been awarded a doctoral degree in computer engineering between academic year 2004-2005 and academic year 2007-2008<sup>7</sup>. Male students take an average of four years to complete computer engineering doctoral degrees, an average of four and a half years to complete electrical engineering and an average of five years to complete computer science doctoral degrees.

## **2. Special Leave of Absence**

The College of Graduate Studies is responsible for implementing UCF's absence/temporary leave policy. The University allows a special leave of absence (not to exceed three semesters) for students who wish to temporarily waive the continuous attendance requirement. A student may request such a leave in cases where the student can demonstrate good cause (for example, illness, family issues, maternity/paternity, financial difficulties, personal circumstances, employment issues).

Special leave of absence will be granted only after approval by the graduate program director for the student's program of study, graduate coordinators, International Services Center (for international students), and the College of Graduate Studies. Application for special leave of absence must be filed by submitting the special leave of absence form no later than the end of the first semester of absence. Time spent in special leave of absence status will not reduce the total time required for degree completion. A student who fails to enroll in the semester following the last term in which the student was in approved special leave of absence status must apply for readmission to the University and maintain continuous enrollment.

Students are allowed seven years from the date of admission to the master's or doctoral program to complete their degree. No course older than seven years at the time of graduation may be used in the program of study for a master's or doctoral degree.

## **3. Readmission**

Students who do not maintain continuous enrollment (missing enrollment for more than three consecutive semesters) must file for readmission to the University. Students applying for readmission to a graduate program must utilize the graduate school application form, which is available online. Readmission is not guaranteed. Whether a student who applies for readmission is eligible for readmission is determined by the particular graduate program.

During the 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 academic years, five male students in the master's degree programs applied for readmission. Six male students in the master's program applied for readmission during academic years 2005-2006 and 2007-2008.

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<sup>7</sup> One female student was awarded a PhD in computer engineering in the summer of 2009. EECS expects to award doctoral degrees in computer engineering to five female students in the next four academic years, 2009-2010 through 2012-2013. These five female candidates are currently enrolled in the computer engineering program.

Two female students applied for readmission to the master's program during the 2004-2005 academic year and one female student applied for readmission to the program in each of the academic years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, while three female students applied for readmission to the program in the 2007-2008 academic year. One male was denied readmission in the 2007-2008 academic year. In academic year 2008-2009, five male students applied for readmission, only one was denied readmission. This student had a low GPA. He reapplied in spring 2009 and was admitted. However, he did not enroll, and the offer of readmission was revoked.

Two male doctoral students applied for readmission during academic year 2004-2005, and one male doctoral student applied for readmission during academic years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. Three doctoral students, one female and two males, applied for readmission during the 2007-2008 academic year. In academic year 2008-2009, one female and one male doctoral student applied for readmission. All doctoral students who applied for readmission during the academic years herein noted were ultimately readmitted. One female doctoral student was denied readmission in the 2007-2008 academic year because she failed the qualifying examination. She reapplied twice in 2008-2009 and was readmitted after her second application.

#### 4. Drop-out Rates per Academic Year

Tables 3A and 3B, below, show the drop-out rate in the master's and PhD programs for academic years 2004-2005 through 2007-2008. The figures include those students who consecutively missed three semesters, withdrew from the program or were disqualified.

**Table 3A: Master's Programs: Drop-out Rate Per Academic Year**

	Master's Programs				
	Total	Female		Male	
2004-2005	47	11	23%	36	76%
2005-2006	51	10	20%	41	80%
2006-2007	39	4	10%	35	90%
2007-2008	42	8	19%	34	81%

**Table 3B: PhD Programs: Drop-out Rate Per Academic Year**

	Doctoral Programs				
	Total	Female		Male	
2004-2005	37	9	24%	28	76%
2005-2006	39	6	15%	33	85%
2006-2007	35	5	14%	30	86%
2007-2008	35	12	34%	23	66%

## **Finding**

The Department finds no evidence of gender disparity in the retention rate of students in either the master's or doctoral programs. The special leave of absence and readmission policies of the University appear to be facially neutral and that there is no evidence of disparate treatment or disparate impact related to these policies. Accordingly, EECS' retention and reentry policies and practices are in compliance with Title IX and DOE's implementing regulations.

### **F. Financial Assistance**

#### **1. Teaching, Research and Graduate Assistantships**

EECS provides various types of financial assistance to students. They include fellowships (Trustee, Presidential and Provost), graduate assistantships, graduate teaching assistantships (GTA), and graduate research assistantships (GRA). Most full-time graduate students are supported by teaching and research assistantships and are compensated equally for comparable assistantships.

Graduate Assistants assists in general office tasks and services that do not involve teaching or research assignments. They may also be assigned to nonacademic offices and functions such as the Registrar's Office, Career Services and the Recreation and Wellness Center.

Faculty members utilize the Incoming Students' Database in recommending students for teaching and research assistantships. The criteria that most faculty members follow for selecting and recommending students for teaching and research assistantships are: quality of the graduating institutions from which the students come, academic records (GPA, scholarships, etc.), strength of letters of recommendation, quality of the student research statement, area of interest, and test scores (GRE and TOEFL).

Some professors commented that they recruit students who have taken courses with them because they had an opportunity to assess the students' interest in a particular subject. Other professors conduct interviews for recruiting students as research assistants.

Dr. Jun Wang and Dr. Z. John Shen are two of the principal investigators on DOE funding. Dr. Wang selects students as GRAs from those who have taken courses with him. If he hires a student that has not taken a course with him, he will interview the student and then give the student a paper to review. Based on the interview and the student's analysis of the paper, he decides whether to recruit the student. During the spring 2009 semester, he had six PhD students as research assistants, two of whom were females.

Dr. Shen selects students as GRAs from those who express interest in his research area. During the spring 2009 semester, he had two research assistants. Both were males.

GTAs are evaluated on their teaching performance each semester. Performance is measured by the use of the GTA Performance Assessment Form provided by the College of Graduate Studies. Assessments must be completed by the supervising faculty member and sent to the College of Graduate Studies by the end of the semester. Completion of the form constitutes a summary assessment, and is based on classroom visits, informal observations, input from students, discussions with the GTA, and other evidence of performance. Each semester, the supervising faculty member is required to meet with the assistant to discuss the assessment.

Table 4, below, shows the total number of teaching, research and graduate assistantships awarded to graduate students from academic year 2004-2005 through academic year 2008-2009. As noted in the table, there is a distinct imbalance between the number of male and female students in each of the programs. However, this is not indicative of discrimination since there are significantly more male students in each of the three programs than female students.

**Table 4: Distribution of Teaching, Research and Graduate Assistantships**

	Teaching Assistantships					Research Assistantships				
	Total	Male		Female		Total	Male		Female	
2004-2005	158	130	82%	28	18%	218	177	81%	41	19%
2005-2006	163	132	81%	31	19%	240	204	85%	36	15%
2006-2007	136	111	82%	25	18%	227	194	85%	33	15%
2007-2008	117	95	81%	22	19%	236	200	85%	36	15%
2008-2009 <sup>8</sup>	43	32	74%	11	26%	142	120	85%	22	15%

Graduate Assistantships					
	Total	Male		Female	
2004-2005	56	44	79%	12	21%
2005-2006	61	48	79%	13	21%
2006-2007	40	28	70%	12	30%
2007-2008	28	26	93%	2	7%
2008-2009 <sup>9</sup>	20	16	80%	4	20%

## Finding

The Department does not find a Title IX violation in the manner in which students are assigned to research groups.

<sup>8</sup> 2008-2009 numbers are representative of spring semester only.

<sup>9</sup> 2008-2009 numbers are representative of spring semester only. Graduate Assistants numbers include Graders.



## 2. Fellowships

Table 5 shows the total number of fellowships awarded to graduate students from academic year 2004-2005 through academic year 2008-2009. As in the case of assistantships, there are more male students than female students in doctoral programs, hence the apparent imbalance in the award of fellowships.

**Table 5: Distribution of Fellowships**

<b>Fellowships</b>					
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>	
<b>2004-2005</b>	51	40	78%	11	22%
<b>2005-2006</b>	41	34	83%	7	17%
<b>2006-2007</b>	41	32	78%	9	22%
<b>2007-2008</b>	35	26	75%	9	26%
<b>2008-2009<sup>10</sup></b>	14	10	71%	4	29%

Fellowships, unlike assistantships, are scholarship awards that are made to students without any work requirement. Students are recommended for fellowships to the EECS graduate coordinators by faculty members. These recommendations are forwarded to the College of Graduate Studies and eventually to a University committee that decides which of the recommended students should be offered a fellowship. The number of students selected for fellowships depends on the level of funding available. In recommending students for fellowships, the typical criteria of merit that most faculty members follow are quality of the graduating institutions from which the student comes, academic record (GPA, scholarships), strength of letters of recommendation, quality of the student research statement, and area of interest and test scores (GRE and TOEFL).

The Trustee Doctoral Fellowship and Presidential Doctoral Fellowship are offered to superior graduate students who are newly enrolled at UCF in one of its doctoral programs or tracks. The Provost's Graduate Fellowship is offered to superior graduate students who are newly enrolled at UCF in one of its master's or doctoral programs. These awards provide multi-year support to the most qualified applicants. The Trustee Doctoral Fellowship is offered to new students who are U.S. citizens or resident aliens entering UCF as full-time students and pursuing doctoral degrees. The Presidential Doctoral Fellowship and the Provost's Graduate Fellowship are offered to new students who are entering as full-time students.

The stipend offered for the Trustee, Presidential and Provost Fellowships is fixed by the College of Graduate Studies, as follows: \$18,000 per year for a maximum of two years for the Trustee Doctoral Fellowship; \$17,000 per year for a maximum of four years for the Presidential Doctoral Fellowship; and \$10,000 for one year for the Provost Graduate Fellowship. The doctoral graduate program of the Provost's Graduate Fellowship recipient may recommend renewal to fund the student for a second year. A Presidential

<sup>10</sup> 2008-2009 numbers are representative of the spring semester only.

Doctoral Fellowship recipient may receive support after four years at the discretion of the School and the College of Graduate Studies. A professor who sponsors a student for a fellowship has the flexibility to supplement the stipend with the professor's research funds.

### **3. Financial Incentives**

The State of Florida offers the Bright Future Scholarship to local students who attend private or public higher education institutions in the state. Most of the students interviewed said that the GTA, GRA, and the Bright Future Scholarship were their source of funding.

### **4. Achievement Awards**

The University sponsors four financial awards for outstanding performance in different areas. The Graduate Teaching Assistant award recognizes excellence in assistants who are not instructors of record, but who provide teaching support and assistance under the direction of a lead teacher.

The Graduate Student Teaching award recognizes excellence in teaching by GTAs who serve as instructors of record and have independent classroom responsibilities. The focus of this award is on the quality of the student's teaching and the academic contributions of those activities.

There is also an award for outstanding master's thesis. The focus of this annual award is on the quality and contribution of the student's thesis research. Excellence of the master's thesis may be demonstrated by publications in journals, awards, and recognitions from professional organizations and by praise from faculty members and other colleagues in the field.

The Outstanding Dissertation Award recognizes doctoral students for excellence in their dissertation. The focus is on the quality and contribution of the dissertation.

The Innovative Thesis or Dissertation Award is sponsored by UCF to recognize cutting-edge use of technology in thesis and dissertations. Each academic college may nominate one student for consideration. Students can win this award only once.

Award winners in the above categories receive a certificate and \$1,000 in cash. As many as two honorable mentions can be made and each student who is mentioned receives a certificate.

Faculty members nominate their students for these awards and submit the names of nominees to graduate coordinators. Nominated students must submit certain required information in order to qualify for the award. The Graduate Committee then reviews the files of each nominee with respect to the merits that a specific award requires. If the number of nominations exceeds the number of awards available, the Graduate

Committee ranks the applicants and recommends the top candidates to the College of Graduate Studies.

### Finding

The Department has not found any evidence of a Title IX violation with respect to the manner in which financial assistance and awards are made. Therefore, the Department finds that the University is in compliance with Title IX and DOE's implementing regulations with respect to the policies, procedures and practices associated with granting awards and other financial assistance.

### G. The Annual Appraisal

EECS started an annual appraisal process during the 2008-2009 academic year. To ensure that PhD students have the requisite background and are prepared to make a successful transition into the research phase of their academic career, the School's Graduate Committee requires students to prepare a *Portfolio of Activities* containing evidence of their academic performance and their research progress to-date. The *Portfolio of Activities* that the student completes must contain a complete record of their coursework, a resume, particularly listing publications and submissions of conference and journal papers, with an abstract of the content of these publications, as well as a short description of independent research projects that they worked on.

The student's portfolio is evaluated by the student's research advisor who completes an assessment of the student's academic performance (*Advisor Assessment* form), and research performance. The student's portfolio and the advisor's assessment are submitted to the Graduate Committee at the end of an academic semester (fall or spring). The Committee reviews the information and grades the student's performance as *Satisfactory Delay*, *Satisfactory Pass*, or *Unsatisfactory*. The Committee also fills out a *Graduate Committee Assessment* form delineating their evaluation of the student's academic and research performance.

The first evaluation of a student must occur prior to the student's entering the 19<sup>th</sup> credit hour of graduate work in the program. In most cases, a second review will take place prior to beginning of the 37<sup>th</sup> credit hour. Students can be removed from the program for poor academic performance and/or inadequate performance in their assigned GTA/GRA responsibilities.

A *Satisfactory Delay* grade indicates a student who has demonstrated satisfactory academic and research performance, but the Graduate Committee needs more information before the student is deemed ready to further pursue his/her PhD degree. A *Satisfactory Pass* indicates a student whose performance is good enough to deem him/her appropriate to further pursue his/her studies in the PhD program. An *Unsatisfactory* grade is assigned to a student whose academic or research activity, or both, are lacking of the caliber of the work expected by a PhD student.

All students passed the annual appraisal in academic year 2008-2009.

## **H. The Qualifying Review**

On an annual basis, and based on the completed student's appraisal template, as well as additional student documentation (up to the discretion of the EECS Graduate Committee), the EECS Graduate Committee will rank the student's performance as *Above Expectation*, *At Expectation*, or *Below Expectation* toward the completion of the PhD degree. The evaluation of the Graduate Committee details the justification for the student's ranking. This justification is provided to the student and the student's advisor.

The Qualifying Review is administered twice a year, on the first Friday of April and on the first Friday of November. Students are allowed to take the examination twice.

Students are notified (no earlier than the end of the first year of their studies and no later than the end of the second year of their PhD studies) whether they have passed the Qualifying Review. A student who passes the Qualifying Review will continue with the completion of the rest of the PhD program's milestones (i.e., Candidacy Examination, Dissertation Proposal Examination, and Dissertation Defense). A student who fails the Qualifying Review after the second attempt will be dismissed from the PhD program and will be given the opportunity to finish their Master's degree, if applicable.

A student who, in the Graduate Committee's opinion, fails the Qualifying Review will be given the opportunity to request a reevaluation of his/her case by the Committee. The decision of the Graduate Committee, as a result of this reevaluation, is final. Annual appraisals end after the student has passed the Qualifying Review.

### **1. Qualifying Review Grading Process**

Each professor who submits questions for the Qualifying Review is responsible for grading the questions he or she submitted. After the grades are tallied, they are submitted to the Graduate Committee for its decision as to which of the students who took the examination attained a passing grade.

### **2. Qualifying Review Pass Rates**

In academic year 2004-2005, nine males failed the Qualifying Review. Six males failed the examination in 2005-2006; two females and two males failed the examination in academic year 2006-2007, while two males failed in 2007-2008. No female failed the examination in academic years 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2007-2008.

As shown in Table 6, the pass rate for male and female students is statistically the same. From 2004-2005 to 2007-2008, the pass rate for male test takers ranged from 75% to 95%. During the same period, the pass rate for female students ranged from 88% to 100%. The average pass rate for male students over the four-year period was 89%, while the average pass rate for female students was 95%, a difference of only 6%.

**Table 6: Qualifying Review Pass/Fail Rate Per Academic Year**

	2004-2005			2005-2006		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Number of takers	42	35	7	65	58	7
Number passing	33	26	7	59	52	7
Number failing	9	9	0	6	6	0

  

	2006-2007			2007-2008		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Number of takers	55	39	16	50	43	7
Number passing	51	37	14	48	41	7
Number failing	4	2	2	2	2	0

## Finding

The data provided shows that both female and male test takers pass the Qualifying Review at the same rate. There is no evidence of bias in the manner in which the examination is prepared or administered. In addition, none of the students interviewed stated any concerns about the examination. Therefore, we find that the Qualifying Review is administered in a manner that complies with Title IX and DOE's implementing regulations.

### I. The Candidacy Examination

Students who are successful in the Qualifying Review must also successfully complete the Candidacy Examination in order to demonstrate readiness for preliminary research in a chosen field of study. This examination is administered by the student's dissertation advisory committee and is comprised of written and oral portions. Preparedness for taking the candidacy requires the acceptance of a professional paper by a peer-review conference or journal that is deemed acceptable to the student's advisory committee. Candidacy requirements must be satisfied within the first 24 months of graduate work. The examination is normally taken near the completion of required course work and must be passed before registering for doctoral dissertation hours. Students must be registered for a minimum of nine credit hours for at least two consecutive years to meet residency requirements.

After passing the Candidacy Examination, students write a dissertation proposal which they present orally to the dissertation advisory committee for approval. The proposal must include a description of the research performed to date and research plans.

A PhD student, before pursuing candidacy, needs to form his/her dissertation committee. The committee should consist of at least three faculty members from the School of EECS and at least one member from outside the School. The dissertation

committee formulates the oral questions based on the candidate's presentation and the submitted proposal. The content varies according to the student's research topic.

There are two parts to the examination, Candidacy I and Candidacy II. Candidacy I verifies whether the student can conduct independent research. The student must publish his/her research in a peer-reviewed conference or journal as first author. Once a student passes Candidacy I, he/she is able to start taking dissertation hours.

Candidacy II is the process that a PhD candidate goes through to defend the proposal of his/her dissertation. The proposal is created by the candidate, in close coordination with a major advisor, and after consultation with other members of the dissertation committee.

When the proposal is completed, it is submitted to the dissertation committee. It is defended by the student in an oral presentation in front of the dissertation committee as well as other interested parties. After the oral presentation, the dissertation committee determines whether the candidate passed or failed.

All students passed the Candidacy Examination from academic year 2004-2005 through academic year 2007-2008. Likewise, all students passed the dissertation requirements during the same period.

## **Finding**

The Department has not found any evidence of a Title IX violation with respect to the manner in which the Candidacy Examination is administered.

## **III. The Environment**

### **A. Climate**

Many of the students who were interviewed said that they did not believe the gender of students had any effect on their interaction with professors. It was their observation that the dynamics among students and between professors and students was positive. Most of the students interviewed felt that the Director of the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, as well as graduate coordinators were accessible and supportive, although they admitted that they had little or no occasion to interact with them.

Some professors were asked to comment on the low number of female students and faculty in EECS and in STEM fields. One professor said that, in the past, having a low number of female students and female faculty was probably due to discriminatory practices. However, he said that now, women are looking for fields that are more beneficial and want to make a difference in the world. He said also that having more family friendly policies, like childcare and statutory requirements such as the provisions

of the Family Medical Leave Act, help in attracting more women to the School and STEM fields.

### **Finding**

The Department has not found any evidence of a Title IX violation with respect to the climate in EECS.

### **B. Gender Bias/Sexual Harassment**

Most students said that gender did not affect any aspect of a student's studies. Faculty members also made similar statements. A majority of the students mentioned that they had not observed or heard of any case of sexual harassment or gender bias.

One female student stated that she experienced gender bias from male students. She said she had to stand her ground in order to get respect from them. She believes women have to prove to others that they are capable.

A male student said that men feel threatened when females are leading. He also said that although he does not believe female students experienced any barriers related to their gender, he would like to see more female students socialize with male students.

On March 30, 2009, a female graduate student in EECS filed a grievance alleging sexual harassment against her doctoral advisor. The matter was investigated pursuant to University Rule 6C7-3.0134. The report of investigation was transmitted to the University President on June 12, 2009. The President approved the report, the matter was resolved, and on June 30, 2009, the case was closed.

### **Finding**

The grievance process is the internal avenue for reviewing and resolving complaints, including sex discrimination and sexual harassment complaints filed by students, faculty and staff. As noted, the grievance process was effective in resolving a sexual harassment complaint. The University is complimented for expeditiously investigating the complaint and bringing the matter to conclusion.

### **Recommendation**

The University should ensure that professors and teaching assistants are informed of the requirements of Title IX and especially its prohibition against sex discrimination. Annual sexual harassment refresher training is recommended for administrators, professors and teaching assistants<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> The University indicated that in spring semester 2009-2010, it held Title IX training for administrators in the College of Arts and Humanities and the College of Engineering and Computer Science. Additionally, Title IX training will be provided to professors and teaching assistants at the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning.

### **C. Maternity/Paternity Leave Policy**

The University does not have a maternity/paternity leave policy. Therefore, any student or faculty seeking extended leave for maternity/paternity matters must do so under UCF's Special Leave of Absence policy.

Some students indicated that the University could offer assistance to students with families by offering more evening classes and by providing childcare services in the evening. Others said that the University could offer larger stipends to their graduate teaching assistants.

#### **Finding**

Although the University's special leave of absence policy does not violate Title IX, and is facially neutral, it does not address the particular situation of a student in need of maternity/paternity leave.

#### **Recommendation**

The Department recommends that the University develop a comprehensive maternity/paternity leave policy for the benefit of its students<sup>12</sup>.

### **D. Women in EECS**

Women in EECS is a student organization whose mission is to foster the success of women by recruiting female students and encouraging them to pursue degrees in the fields of computer science, computer engineering and electrical engineering. It organizes a variety of activities throughout the year, many of which are sponsored by the School. Between October 1 and 4, 2008, it participated in the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing, in Keystone, Colorado.

Students praised the Director of EECS for his support of the organization. Many female students said that they are members of Women in EECS. Some students said that even though they have not actively participated in events, they receive emails from the organization informing them of upcoming events and inviting them to participate. All agreed that Women in EECS is very active and well supported in the University and identify the organization as the result of efforts taken by EECS to assist women in adjusting to the academic environment.

Some female students said that Women in EECS provides good networking opportunities. Many students, both males and females, commented positively about the support the School gives to the organization. In this regard, they said that EECS provides funding to the organization, for attending conferences and for inviting speakers to the School.

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<sup>12</sup> In March 2010, the University amended its Special Leave Policy to include maternity/paternity as a basis for requesting special leave.



## **Finding**

EECS is commended for its efforts in attracting female students to EECS and for assisting in creating an environment that is conducive to their academic well-being. Similarly, the Director is commended for supporting the organization.

### **E. Colloquia Speakers**

Colloquia sessions cover a wide range of topics, and are a means of staying informed on developments in the field of computer science and electrical and computer engineering. Students and faculty are expected to attend these sessions.

A female professor is the coordinator of this program. She stated that she asks other professors to recommend speakers and tries to have a female speaker each semester. Three females were invited to speak during the 2008-2009 academic year. However, two of them canceled their appointments. The third addressed the session in the fall of 2008.

## **Finding**

The Department finds that although there has been a paucity of female speakers at colloquia sessions, EECS has made significant efforts to invite female speakers to these sessions. Accordingly, we do not find a Title IX violation here.

## **Recommendation**

The Department encourages EECS to continue its efforts at inviting females to speak at colloquia sessions. EECS should explore the possibility of coordinating with Women in EECS and other University organizations, such as the Women's Research Center, to develop and implement creative ways for attracting females to speak at colloquia sessions.

### **F. Distance Learning Program**

Some students mentioned the distance-learning program as an example of a program that helps students balance their studies with their other responsibilities. Many of the classes at EECS are offered online. Students are not required to attend classes in person and they can communicate with their professors at times of their own choosing through email or by telephone.

## **Promising Practice**

The Department finds that the distance-learning program is a promising practice that can be adopted by other institutions.

## **G. Childcare Services**

The University does not provide childcare services. However, the College of Graduate Studies maintains a list of off-campus childcare providers accessible on their website.

UCF has an early enrichment center on-campus. Students, employees and community members may enroll their children at the UCF Creative School for Children. To be eligible, the child must be potty trained and be between two years and five years old. The center operates between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. A student government scholarship is available to parents who are UCF students. To be eligible, a parent must have a minimum 2.0 GPA and demonstrate financial need as determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Two awards of \$750 each were made in spring 2009.

### **Finding**

Although the University does not provide childcare services, it maintains a list of off-campus providers for the benefit of its students and staff. In addition, the UCF Creative School for Children is an alternative for those parents of children between two years and five years old.

## **H. Campus Safety<sup>13</sup>**

UCF has multiple programs to prevent crime and provide safety. The UCF Police is primarily responsible for these tasks with the help of other campus offices and specialty units.

### **1. Victim Services**

UCF Victim Services is a unit of the UCF Police Department. It provides educational and advocacy services to the UCF community. Educational services include hosting special events to promote prevention awareness. Training programs for members of the UCF community are also offered. These services are free and are available 24 hours a day to students, faculty and staff.

Through the advocacy program victims/survivors are provided support and information about the options that are available to them. Victims are informed of reporting options, and are provided immediate safety and security, emergency shelter and nonemergency medical services.

Advocates can also provide crisis intervention, emotional support, practical assistance, criminal justice and UCF administrative support, and appropriate referrals to on and off campus agencies and resources.

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<sup>13</sup> The Department conducted a review and analysis of campus safety features because it believes that females are more often victims of violence than males. The intent of the Department is to determine whether campus safety features offer the same protection for females as they afford males.

The phone number and a description of the services provided were predominantly displayed behind restrooms doors throughout the Harris Corporation Engineering Center. Many students were aware of the phone number and said they would dial the number if they had any problems on campus.

## **2. Safe Escort and Patrol Service**

The Safe Escort and Patrol Service is under the control of the UCF Police Department. Its purpose is to provide a free, safe passage for students, staff and faculty who need to walk or bike the main campus after dark. The service is activated by dialing a telephone number. Service is provided from 7:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., Sunday through Thursday.

## **3. UCF Shuttle Transportation Services and Lynx Bus**

UCF provides a shuttle bus service as alternate transportation for its students. The service operates primarily from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with a beginning time of 6:30 a.m. on some routes. The program serves many local student residential communities, providing transportation to and from the main campus. The campus destination points are selected to allow students a short distance to travel to classrooms or campus activities. The transportation service allows students to leave their vehicles at their place of residence. There is no per trip cost to ride and students are transported to the core facilities of the campus. The service covers 15 off-campus residential communities and Central Florida Research Park.

## **4. On-Campus Shuttle Bus Services**

UCF also provides an on-campus shuttle system called the Black and Gold Line. This system consists of four buses. The Black and Gold Line operates 12 hours per day (7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.) each class day during the fall and spring semesters. During the summer term, it runs from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

## **5. Blue Light Phones**

Blue Light Phones provide direct contact to the campus 911 service. The phones are located on every floor of every garage, and on poles throughout the campus. Once the red button on the phone is activated, the blue light begins to flash. A police dispatcher will then come on the line and ask about the nature of the emergency. An officer will be dispatched to that location to assist. Most students and professors identified this service as an important safety program.

## **6. Crime Alerts**

Some students stated that the UCF Police alerts them via email of any on-campus crime. In addition, the UCF Police publishes bulletins alerting students and University personnel of any criminal activity on the campus.

## **7. Self-Defense Courses**

UCF Police provides self-defense courses to women under a program called Self-Defense Awareness and Familiarization Exchange (S.A.F.E.). The registration fee is \$5.00. Instructors are UCF police officers who have been trained by the National Self-Defense Institute. The courses are designed to provide attendees with information, tactics, and options that may be useful for defending against various types of crimes perpetrated against women.

### **Finding**

The University has developed extensive and efficient programs for ensuring campus safety for everyone. Most students are aware of the safe escort program and the blue light phones. We find that these programs are practical approaches for ensuring the safety of students, especially female students who may be more likely to become victims of crime. The University is lauded for the extensive efforts it has made to increase the safety and security of its students.

### **Promising Practice**

The University is commended for its efforts to reduce on-campus crime and violence. The Department believes that the University's efforts to mitigate crime through its campus safety initiatives such as "blue light phones," "safe escort," "self-defense courses" and "Victim Services" programs are practical crime prevention measures and that these practices should be emulated by other institutions.

## **IV. Title IX Regulations**

Title IX requires educational institutions that are recipients of Federal financial assistance to develop and implement nondiscrimination policies and procedures, and to appoint a Coordinator for implementing and coordinating Title IX functions. The Department's implementing regulations, 10 C.F.R. Section 1042.140(b), require recipients to adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for the prompt and equitable resolution of student and employee complaints that allege actions prohibited by Title IX. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) recommends that grievance procedures include both an informal and a formal process, and also provide complainants with information on their right to file a discrimination complaint with an appropriate Federal agency if there is no satisfactory resolution of the complaint.<sup>14</sup>

Pursuant to Title IX, each recipient of Federal financial assistance must notify students and employees of the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee or employees appointed to coordinate and administer its Title IX grievance process. This information should be disseminated through newspapers and magazines operated by the recipient, and by memoranda or other written communication distributed to each student and employee. A recipient is required to prominently include a statement of its

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<sup>14</sup> See *Title IX Legal Manual*, U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (Jan. 11, 2001).

policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of sex in each announcement, catalog, or application form that it makes available to students and employees or which is otherwise used in connection with the recruitment of students and employees. 10 C.F.R. Sections 1042.135 to 140.

**A. The Title IX Coordinator and Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Programs**

The Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EO/AA) Programs is identified by the University as the office responsible for performing Title IX compliance functions. The office is headed by a Director, who serves as the Title IX Coordinator. The Director reports to the University Chief of Staff. The Office has one other employee, an administrative assistant. The office had another position, Coordinator of Equal Opportunity Programs. The person who occupied the position left the University and the position was frozen due to budgetary constraints.

The Office is responsible for monitoring compliance with civil rights laws, issuing guidelines and policies, and developing programs that create, promote, and enhance awareness of anti-discrimination laws. EO/AA facilitates campus policies and programs for students, faculty, staff, applicants, visitors, and community members in accordance with more than 10 statutes and numerous sets of guidelines. These policies and programs are normally administered by operating units and monitored by EO/AA.

The Office has a mechanism for measuring the success rate of women in the University. In this connection, it prepares an annual report which follows five-year tenure and promotion rates. If deficiencies are detected in these areas, the office creates an action plan to address the situation. According to the Title IX Coordinator, the Board of Trustees is interested in enrollment statistics and the promotion of women and minorities in the University.

It is the role of the Title IX Coordinator to look across the University and do self-audits as to how UCF is doing in achieving diversity. The Title IX Coordinator also tracks how females and minorities are doing. The Coordinator also completes reports on discrimination complaints and suggests remedial actions for the President's review.

**B. Notice Requirement**

The University utilizes various methods for disseminating information to students, faculty and staff about its regulations and policies for implementing Title IX. Among them is the publication of a handbook called the *Golden Rule*, which contains the student code of conduct. It contains the University's policy regarding nonacademic discipline of students, and limited academic grievance procedures for graduate and undergraduate students.

The Golden Rule does not cite to Title IX, but it provides guidance for proper conduct on the campus and enforces the non-discrimination, diversity, and anti-harassment policies

of the University. It also contains procedures for resolution of disputes and provides guidance on how to seek assistance for resolving issues. One female student stated that if she wanted to file a sex discrimination complaint, would look to the Golden Rule for guidance on to do so.

Faculty and staff receive Title IX information in their orientation, training, and non-discrimination statement forms. Some administrators said that there are notices posted on bulleting boards throughout the campus. However, during our visit we did not see any Title IX information on bulleting boards.

Most students, faculty and some administrators who were interviewed were unaware of the existence of the Title IX Coordinator, and had no knowledge of Title IX procedures, or Title IX's prohibition against sex discrimination, except within the context of sports.

Some faculty members said that if they had a Title IX issue, they would consult with the Director of EECS. A majority of the students indicated that they would speak to a faculty member, or search the University's website for information on how to file a Title IX complaint, if the need arose.

Since our visit, the University has undertaken a multi-pronged approach to notify students and University personnel about Title IX policies and regulations. EO/AA created a Facebook page for posting information about Title IX. The Office also created a Twitter account for the same purpose. EO/AA's website was amended to reflect the new information and dissemination channels. The Facebook and Twitter links are posted on the main webpage.

Since the onsite visit, the Interim Dean sent an email to all students, undergraduate and graduate, informing them about UCF's discrimination policies, including its Title IX policy, and identifying the Title IX Coordinator. The email also provides information about OCRD. The Dean's memorandum is also displayed in various locations throughout the College of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, on bulletin boards and on overhead monitors.

### **C. Training**

Title IX training is required for faculty members and administrators. Faculty members must attend training session on general discrimination issues during their entrance orientation. This training covers Title IX and other anti-discrimination laws. The University withholds health benefits for any faculty member or administrator who does not attend the training.

EO/AA is currently implementing an 18-month cycle for training professors and administrators. As of the date of the onsite visit, two thousand of the five thousand UCF employees had already received training since the inception of the 18-month cycle in 2008. Prior to the current system, only generalized training was offered. The Title IX

Coordinator stated that employees who previously attended training were those least likely to need the training.

The Director of Human Resources of the College of Engineering and Computer Science is responsible for disseminating information about Title IX and for conducting part of the training in EECS. However, the University does not require Title IX training for its students, although it will provide such Title IX training if invited by a Department or School to do so. In December 2008, EECS invited the Title IX Coordinator to offer training to its teaching assistants, faculty members and administrators.

Sexual harassment training is mandatory for teaching assistants but very few students were aware of this. After our onsite visit, the University undertook efforts to make sure that teaching assistants receive sexual harassment training.

### **Finding**

Although the onsite visit uncovered deficiencies in the Title IX notice and training requirements, the University has been proactive in undertaking measures to correct them. The Department applauds the University for its efforts in this regard.

### **Promising Practice**

The 18-month cycle for providing discrimination and diversity training is a promising practice that can be adopted by other institutions.

### **Recommendation**

We encourage the University to continue disseminating information concerning its Title IX policies and practices to students and employees.

## **V. Title IX Grievance and Complaint Procedures**

### **A. Filing Complaints within EECS**

Two officials within EECS are authorized to receive Title IX complaints. They are the Director of EECS and the Human Resources Director. The Human Resources Director is responsible for accepting discrimination complaints filed by employees. Both individuals stated that they are instructed to contact EO/AA on any discrimination complaint that cannot be resolved informally.

### **B. Filing Complaints with EO/AA**

EO/AA is responsible for investigating allegations of discrimination. This authority has been delegated by the University President. When discriminatory policies or practices have been identified, the EO/AA Director recommends that the University President

take corrective action. The President then assigns implementation of the remedies and corrective actions deemed appropriate.

Complaint forms are available in the EO/AA office or online on the office's website. A letter outlining the problem or a meeting with a representative of the EO/AA Office may begin the process, but a signed, detailed complaint form is required to initiate the grievance process. EO/AA determines during the intake phase whether the claim, if substantiated, would show a violation of University policies. The receipt of a complaint signed by the grievant will be followed within 14 days by document collection and determination of jurisdiction. If the complaint is appropriate for investigation under this process, the office will gather statements of facts and respond to concerns stated in the grievance. Investigation is concluded within 60 days of the date jurisdiction is determined.

Once the investigation is completed, the Report of Investigation and recommendation from the EO/AA Director is forwarded to the President. The President will then make a decision on the grievance, which is communicated to the grievant and the responsible administrator(s).

There is also an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process. In some cases, the President may refer a complaint for processing through ADR.

### **Finding**

The grievance procedures do not include a deadline for the President to make a final determination on a complaint. In addition, they do not provide for an appeal of the President's decision and do not indicate which state or federal agencies have jurisdiction over some grievances.

### **Recommendation**

We recommend including in the grievance procedures a deadline for the President to make a final decision and an appeal process whereby a complainant is given the opportunity to request reconsideration of the President's decision on a grievance or discrimination complaint<sup>15</sup>. The name and contact information of state and Federal agencies that have jurisdiction over complaints that allege a violation of state or Federal statutes should be provided to complainants<sup>16</sup>. In addition, we encourage the University

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<sup>15</sup> The University has indicated that it will not implement DOE's recommendations to establish a deadline for the President to make a final decision and to include an appeal process for requesting reconsideration of the President's decisions. Although the University has demonstrated that its complaint process is effective, DOE's implementing regulations require grievance procedures to be both prompt and equitable. To satisfy the requirement for promptness and reasonableness, definite timetables and deadlines for completing each stage of the complaint process should be included in the complaint procedures. Therefore, DOE encourages the University to reconsider its position on the recommendations herein made.

<sup>16</sup> In March 2010, EO/AA posted on its website the external resources that are available to complainants for filing discrimination complaints.



to disseminate more widely and meaningfully to students and employees information concerning the availability of alternative dispute resolution methods.

### **C. Filing Sexual Misconduct Complaints**

The Office of Student Conduct, which is under the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, coordinates all disciplinary proceedings involving sexual misconduct by students, as defined in the Golden Rule. Victims of sexual misconduct may report these incidents to the UCF Police, the Office of Student Conduct or to UCF Victim Services.

Students charged with violations of the Rules of Conduct are given notice of the charges and complaints against them and are provided an opportunity to respond to the charges at a disciplinary hearing. Victims of sexual misconduct are given the opportunity to offer comments regarding the sanctions imposed upon the charged student, should that student be found in violation of University policies. In cases where an alleged offender's behavior poses a threat to the University community, the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities may immediately suspend the student from the University on an interim basis until a hearing can be convened to confirm or cancel that interim suspension.

Both the alleged victim and the alleged offender may be accompanied by an advisor of their choice at the disciplinary hearing. Students found in violation of the Rules of Conduct regarding sexual misconduct are sanctioned in accordance with provisions in the Disciplinary Sanctions section of the Golden Rule. Sanctions include disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University. Disciplinary proceedings may be held in complaints of alleged sexual misconduct, even when formal charges under state law are not brought.

A wide range of services designed to assist and educate students in resolving their disputes are available. The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities combines services such as Student Legal Services, Dispute Resolution Services, and the Office of Student Conduct for such purposes.

### **D. Dispute Resolution Services**

The Dispute Resolution Services Office is responsible for providing training in alternative dispute resolution methods. The services provided include training in mediation techniques; one-on-one coaching to educate student, faculty, and staff members on conflict management skills; and customized educational training to educate an audience around topics related to conflict management and resolution. Training is also offered for those interested in becoming certified mediators for UCF and the UCF community.

#### **E. The Ombuds Office**

The Ombuds Office was established to facilitate impartial and independent resolution to problems that arise on campus, especially those that have not been adequately addressed through usual channels. This office can informally investigate complaints if usual avenues of appeal or grievance have been exhausted. In addition, the Office makes referrals to individuals that are experts in a specific concern and may recommend changes/improvements to University policy, rules, or procedures that are outdated, unclear or ineffective.

#### **F. Women's Research Center**

The Women's Research Center was established to conduct activities related to the advancement of women on campus and in the Central Florida area. Recent activities of the Center include a campus quality of life survey, a study of sexual harassment among students, and an assessment of women leaders in the Orlando area.

The vision of the Women's Research Center is to enhance the prominence of UCF in research relevant to women and to enhance the research capacity of UCF women faculty.

#### **G. Student Legal Services**

The purpose of this program is to encourage students to seek the advice of an attorney when they anticipate or encounter legal difficulties. On-campus attorneys advise students on any type of legal issues, including discrimination. In addition, legal representation, up to and including all stages of trial, is provided in certain types of cases, including discrimination complaints.

#### **Finding**

The Department applauds the University for the number and variety of programs for resolving disputes and complaints it has implemented. However, information about these programs is difficult to locate on the University's website.

#### **Recommendation**

The University should conspicuously post on its website information about its policies and procedures for filing complaints, including information for filing complaints of sexual misconduct<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> In March 2010, the University informed us that it had rearranged its website to provide more information about its policies and procedures for filing discrimination complaints, including complaints of sexual misconduct.

## **VI. Sexual Harassment Policy**

Regulations implementing Title IX, at 10 C.F.R. Part 1042, require that institutions receiving financial assistance from the Department adopt policies against sex discrimination in their programs and activities. The regulations also require that grantees develop procedures that provide a mechanism for discovering sexual harassment and sex discrimination as early as possible, and for effectively correcting problems of sexual harassment and sex discrimination.

### **A. Sexual Harassment Policy**

The University President issued a statement on equal opportunity and affirmative action on February 1, 2007, that elaborates on the University's sex discrimination and sexual harassment policy. The statement is posted on the EO/AA's website and in the University's Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs.

UCF Regulation 3.001 contains the University's sexual harassment policy and its regulations for processing complaints of sexual harassment. The regulation provides that an aggrieved person may report the conduct to his/her supervisor or to a higher level for further action; pursue informal resolution of the complaint; or file a formal written grievance in accordance with UCF Regulation 3.0134.

### **B. Preventive Measures**

In 2006, the University surveyed its students to determine how to best increase awareness and prevention programs. It was an effort in partnership with UCF's Women Research Center, the Victim Services Office and the American Association of University Women. The survey targeted undergraduate students in the main Orlando campus as well as in the Daytona Beach and Cocoa campuses. After this survey was conducted, further preventive measures were undertaken by the University.

EO/AA provides sexual harassment training to students, staff, faculty, and administrators. However, most students indicated that they have not taken sexual harassment training. Only a few students were aware that sexual harassment training is required or at least is included in teaching assistants' training. Some faculty and administrators said that the University offers sexual harassment training during orientation, but that they had not taken refresher training.

## **Finding**

The policies, procedures, and practices adopted by the University for discouraging sexual harassment and for processing complaints of sexual harassment are within the standards established by Title IX and DOE implementing regulations. The University's 18-month cycle is a promising practice that can be adopted by other institutions for making sure faculty and staff are well trained in discrimination and sexual harassment policies and procedures.

## **Recommendation**

The Department recommends that the University devise meaningful ways to publicize its sexual harassment policy. The offices authorized to receive and process complaints of sexual harassment, together with the names, titles, addresses, and telephone numbers of the University personnel who operate them, should be posted and highlighted<sup>18</sup>. External agencies that are authorized to accept and process sexual harassment complaints, including the addresses and telephone numbers of such agencies and the time limits for contacting them, should also be posted. The University is encouraged to continue designing and creating meaningful educational programs for increasing the awareness of students, student organizations, faculty, and academic staff of the nature of sexual harassment and how to avoid becoming victims or perpetrators of sexual harassment.

## **VII. Conclusion**

The Department finds that the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science is in compliance with Title IX in its programs, practices, and activities. However, the Department encourages EECS and the University to continue its efforts at disseminating information and in training students, faculty and staff in Title IX practices, policies and procedures and the requirements of DOE implementing regulations.

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<sup>18</sup> In March 2010, the University rearranged its website to provide more information about its sexual harassment policy. Additionally, the University posted information about the resources available and the personnel authorized to receive and process sexual harassment complaints.